

Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee – Community Meeting 3

SUBJECT Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee potential changes to water allocation policies – Meeting with invited water users

WHEN Wednesday 14 February 2018, 7-9PM

WHERE Kiwi Hall, Featherston

ATTENDEES

WHAITUA COMMITTEE Peter Gawith, Esther Dijkstra, Aidan Bichan, Colin Olds, Vanessa Tipoki.

PROJECT TEAM Alastair Smaill, Paula Hammond, Mike Grace, Matt Hickman, Mike Thompson.

WATER USERS 14 water users attended the meeting.

Question 1: Is there anything you still don't understand?

- Evidence to show what difference raised levels at the Waipoua would do
- Why focus on torrent fish?
- How much time will we have to react?
- Invest hundreds of thousands of \$\$ in
- What time do we have to make decisions?
- Connectivity and measurability = Cat A??
- Well-being impact
- Happy with restrictions on shallow gravel takes, question evidence associated with deeper bores
- Option to step minimum flow and retain 50%
- Benefit of river management e.g. riparian margins
- Alternatives of managing flow for torrent fish
- More information of quality
- Is it just flow to be measured?
- What about Greytown sewage?
- What if cease takes are implemented and river still drops?
- Monitoring before implementation
- Where is evidential monitoring from past to substantiate proposed regulation?
- What's different from 30 years ago re flows and fish life?
- How can Whaitua ensure that regulations aren't implemented immediately e.g. DoC/F&G view?
- What is the gain to the flow of ceasing taking but the river is still dropping – has someone worked this out?
- Are we monitoring in the right places?

Question 2: Having heard what's being proposed, what's your reaction?

- Question about economic viability of proposal
- Real questions about evidence based information
- We should be monitoring aquifers. Aquifers do not necessarily reflect what's happening in rivers
- Loss of regional economy
- Can handle 50% restriction. 100% - capital value loss
- Increased supplementary feed
- Too scared to open second letter
- Better communication
- No longer summer safe – no current restrictions
- Will need to lay off a staff unit due to reduced production
- Drop 100 cows - \$150K pa. 50/50 share likely to lose jobs. Would farm stay in dairy. Three families at risk. Mental health considerations. 60 year history of dairy use.
- Decline in land value and community effects
- Impacts across Wairarapa
- Why not focus on MDC leakage over 5 years?
- If irrigators have to spend \$100K so should councils – equity
- Not overly surprised
- Make sure what we do, makes a difference
- Going to have a massive impact on farm income
- Concern about viability

Question 3: What would it take for you to be able to transition to a new water regime?

- Variable with different systems
- Waipoua – immediate effect if put in place now
- Too quick – massive kneejerk reaction
- 10>20 years' time to react
- 10 year consents, staged
- Can cope better with restrictions Feb onwards. Not at the end of the year (higher demands)
- Every situation different economic effect
- Timeframe long enough to ensure in depth study in place to justify changes
- Status quo – what does it look like now, in 5 years, in 10 years?
- Partly irrigated properties will feel it most
- Close down water races – water temperature so high – campylobacter and salmonella in calves
- No new takes
- New takes – GW big roll out new takes – big impact on existing users
- Another water supply
- Time to figure out how to adjust
- Gene splicing technology – drought resistant species but will take time to develop

- With drying conditions predicted, why aren't we doing something proactive?
- Will make the changes but will not be the same: less water, less labour, less income, less spend
- How can we/you KNOW that these changes will make a difference
- FMU = monitoring – is there enough information?
- 5years could start system change
- 10years – 10 years ahead, than 10 years to get out. Continuing dumb decision
- Can't go back – no economies of scale in past/pre irrigation models
- Storage on farm is expensive/complex
- What are the economics of on farm versus regional storage?
- Economics of regional impacts and mitigation of regional storage?
- Immediate implementation will put us off land
- Need to find whole community not just farm economy focused solutions
- Align solutions with Wairarapa economic development
- Only option is on farm storage which is very expensive/ or uneconomic
- Water no good if it is not reliable
- Deficit irrigation needs reliability vs inefficient irrigation (over saturation)
- Another water supply
- Time to figure out how to adjust
- With dry conditions predicted, more planning about ways to react.
- Higher understanding of waterbodies

Question 4: What would happen if the proposed changes were introduced now, or in 5 years, or in 10 years, or in 20 years?

- We have the water, the time taken to make it more reliable
- Enabling policy and alternatives to allow change
- River management to assist reliability
- At this stage, no technology available that would help, but may in the future
- Already doing our best to operate in a dry environment
- Five years too short – incremental steps are needed
- A proper time horizon and staged approach will better allow for adaptation – the ability to plan ahead is essential

Question 5: What are the main considerations the Committee should keep front of mind when confirming timeframes for a new water use regime?

- Economic viability
- Time for effects to take place
- Certainty of water consent for longer term. 20years or more.
- Enables investment for change
- Farmers are dealing with numerous things, not just this e.g. IRD, Worksafe, Fonterra – Cost of compliance
- It takes time to find an implement new solutions
- Not just a problem for the farmer – downstream effects for the shrinking economy